

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

Rebellion against new Liberia rulers

MON, April 16 (R) — A Liberian radio station said today troops had rebelled against the new government that came to power on Saturday and had killed a member of the ruling Redemption Council. Elwa Radio, a missionary station run by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said some 100 troops had been arrested and a massive search was going on for the "artillery commander" of the rebellion. The radio said the "artillery commander" of the rebellion, set up by Sergeant Samuel Doe after President William Tolbert was overthrown on Saturday, had been killed on Monday "in an ambush by troops disloyal to the new government." The name of the dead man was not clear to the radio. In another report, the radio said trials of government officials began today with Joseph Cheson, the justice portfolio, appearing before a five-man military tribunal. Meanwhile, informed sources in the Ivory Coast of Abidjan said that the bodies of Mr. Tolbert and 27 other killed in the coup were thrown into mass graves yesterday.

5, Number 1335

AMMAN, THURSDAY APRIL 17, 1980 — JAMADI AL THANI 2, 1400

Price: Jordan 50 fils; Syria 50 piastres; Lebanon 75 piastres; Saudi Arabia 1 riyal; UAE 1 dirham; Great Britain 25 pence.

Regional Briefs

ABUL, April 16 (R) — A United States serviceman and a woman were shot dead by four gunmen here today in a shoot-out between the gunmen, police and police said. One of the gunmen was killed and two were wounded in the shoot-out, in which four other people were killed. The motive for the attack was not known but police said it was political. The four gunmen opened fire on the army petty officer, serving as a sub-aqua instructor for the Navy, as he left home to go to work. A Turkish Navy man, serving as his driver, was also killed. The gunmen fled in motorcycles chased by a police squad car which intermingled on the shores of the Bosphorus Straits. Turkish army units joined the ensuing gun battle. When the shooting died down, the gunmen were dead, two were injured and the had escaped. One army commando, one policeman, a policeman and a passer-by were also wounded, police said.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — The Rome office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) today denied that it had supplied arms and ammunition to Italy's Red Brigades. In uncorroborated stories from Italian newspapers today alleged that Palestinian groups supplied the Red Brigades with the weapons used in the murder of former Prime Minister Aldo Moro two years ago. The PLO said it had no knowledge of the alleged confession of the Brigades leader arrested last February. "The PLO and its leader, Yasser Arafat, have repeatedly condemned Italian terrorism as a threat to democracy," the PLO statement said. "We have absolutely nothing to do with this affair. We are collaborating with the Italian authorities to help clarify this matter," the statement added.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — A powerful bomb exploded in the south of Beirut today, killing three people and injuring others. The explosion occurred in a crowded market area. The cause of the explosion was not immediately clear. The explosion occurred in a crowded market area. The cause of the explosion was not immediately clear.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — President Habib Bourguiba today named Belkhouja as Tunisia's new foreign minister, a presidential man said. Mr. Belkhouja, 60, replaces Mr. Mohammad Elhaj, the outgoing foreign minister. Mr. Bourguiba also named that Mr. Sadok Ben Jemaa would replace Mr. Belkhouja as the minister of communications and transport. No was given for the cabinet shuffle.

ABUL, April 16 (AP) — Thirty persons were indicted today on charges of forming an illegal communist party plotting to overthrow the regime of President Anwar Sadat. The accused, including journalists and five lawyers, were also charged with stirring anti-government leaflets calling for the establishment of a "people's government." If found guilty, they would face 25 years imprisonment at hard labour, court officials said.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — Four Arab countries will this week form a new insurance company that will compete for business with the existing companies, Kuwait finance ministry sources said. The new insurance company, to be based in Bahrain, will be founded by Kuwait, Libya, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, they said. The Finance Minister Abdul Rahman Al Aftit told Reuters in Qatar, yesterday that the agreement setting up the company would be signed this Saturday. He cited the company as an example of projects which could absorb Arab money presently sent abroad. The Kuwaiti sources said the new company would compete with Lloyd's of London, among other groups, for insurance business. Lloyd's last year angered Gulf countries with its refusal to insure Arab ships, later reversed, to impose a war risk premium on ships in the Gulf. Private sector Gulf companies have already joined an Arab war risk insurance syndicate, with representatives from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Arabia, Iraq and Iran.

ABUL, April 16 (Agencies) — French Communist Party leader Georges Marchais today discussed with Lebanese President Elias Suleiman the Middle East and Lebanese situations. Mr. Marchais, 53, to reporters after the meeting, said France could play a role finding a settlement of the Middle East situation as of its international standing. Mr. Marchais is expected to visit the Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat on his three-day stay in Lebanon. He said the French Communist Party advocated French official recognition on the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people and effective French support to help the creation of a Palestinian state. Mr. Marchais said he should extend official recognition to the PLO and in that way invite Mr. Arafat to visit France. He said that he was sending his own invitation to the Palestinian leader to visit France.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — Bulgaria announced today that its foreign minister will visit Iraq, four months after a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. The Bulgarian Agency (BTA) said Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov will go to Baghdad in the next few days. Iraq recalled its ambassador and ordered 150 Iraqi students to leave Bulgaria last month, after two Iraqis were killed and others injured in fighting between Iraqi communist and non-communist students in the Iraqi government, which accused Bulgarian authorities of complicity, also banned its citizens from travelling to Bulgaria to trade relations with Sofia.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — Czechoslovakia's foreign minister, Mr. Jiri Chlumpek, today arrived in Kuwait for talks on bilateral relations and political questions including the Middle East, the Kuwait News Agency said. Mr. Chlumpek went straight into talks with Kuwait's foreign minister, Sheikh Saad Al Sabah, the agency added.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malabris arrived last night on an official visit to Algeria, the Algerian News Agency reported. He said on arrival that his visit was part of a tour to find a "peaceful solution to the situation in South West Asia", it added without further details. Malabris, who went earlier to Syria, India, Iraq and Libya, will return home after his stay in Algeria in order to meet President Fidel Castro on his mission.

ABUL, April 16 (R) — Venezuelan Mines and Energy Minister Jetero Calderon Berti made a brief visit to Algeria today to a one-hour meeting with his Algerian counterpart, Mr. Belkhabaz, the Algerian News Agency reported. Mr. Calderon, who came from France where he is accompanying Venezuelan President Luis Herrera Campins on an official visit, is expected to return to Paris later.

Ireland moots troop pullout from UNIFIL

DUBLIN, April 16 (Agencies) — The Irish government today indicated it was considering withdrawing its 700-strong contingent from the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and issued a thinly-veiled criticism of Israel.

Foreign Minister Brian Lenihan told parliament Ireland's participation in UNIFIL was based on the understanding that the governments concerned gave it cooperation. "Unfortunately we have increasing reason to question whether this most basic condition is being met," he added.

Earlier Irish army headquarters announced that an Irish soldier with UNIFIL had died in a Haifa hospital from wounds received in clashes with right-wing militiamen in South Lebanon.

Relations between Ireland and Israel have become strained over Israeli support for the right-wing militia. Mr. Lenihan told MPs Dublin had pressed Israel over the past two years to help UNIFIL function effectively.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim said today that threats and acts of harassment by the rightists against U.N. forces in southern Lebanon had continued. The situation remained tense, he said, in the latest of a series of written reports to the Security Council.

The de facto forces—the U.N.'s term for the right-wing militia commanded by Maj. Saad Haddad—had reopened a coastal road which had earlier been closed and another checkpoint one kilometre from UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura had been removed.

Roads in the militia-controlled enclave, however, were still closed to UNIFIL, making it impossible to relieve and resupply U.N. observation posts there.

Dr. Waldheim, who is at present abroad, said in his report that the U.N. posts were normally relieved on a weekly basis. He said two posts had not been relieved since March 19 and two others since April 3.

He said UNIFIL's difficulties were compounded by the damage caused to the force's helicopters as a result of the shelling of Naqoura last Saturday. Urgent efforts were being made to replace them.

When the council resumed the debate on southern Lebanon that it adjourned yesterday, Sir Anthony Parsons of Britain said: "We condemn the murderous attacks on UNIFIL personnel and on their headquarters by Maj. Haddad's forces," he said.



U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin touch glasses in a toast at the White House Tuesday evening, where President Carter hosted a dinner in Mr. Begin's honour. (AP wirephoto)

At least eight killed, 30 injured Bloody Beirut clashes highlight worsening Iraq-Iranian relations

BEIRUT, April 16 (R) — At least eight people died today in clashes between Lebanese supporters of Iraq and Iran and Syrian peacekeeping troops moved in to check the fighting around the Iraqi embassy.

The two factions clashed with machineguns and rocket grenades in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

Iraq and Iran are involved in a bitter quarrel which has spread to Lebanese supporters of Iraq's ruling Baath Party and Lebanese Shi'ite Muslims, who back Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The Arab Deterrent Force — the Syrian troops who halted Lebanon's 1975-76 civil war — said at least eight people died in today's fighting, but the clashes had stopped after Syrian patrols went into the area and asked leaders of both factions to remove their armed followers. Hospital sources said at least 30 were injured.

In the latest development highlighting the steadily worsening relations between Iran and Iraq, Iranian Foreign Minister Sadeq Qotbzadeh today called for the destruction of the administration of President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.

Last night, Mr. Hussein branded Ayatollah Khomeini a "rubbish Shah" and hinted that Iraq was prepared to use force to solve the conflict with Iran and its "oppressive clique."

In an interview with the Tehran newspaper Kayhan published today, Mr. Qotbzadeh listed several conditions for solving the Iraqi-Iranian crisis.

His conditions included the destruction of the administration of President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.

Iran's regime, and the release of all political prisoners in Iraq, including the Najaf religious leader, Ayatollah Mohammad Bakir Al-Sadr, whose reported disappearance sparked the Beirut violence.

There has been no independent confirmation of Iranian newspaper reports that he had been killed. Arab diplomatic sources in Beirut said he had vanished from his Najaf home earlier this month and had been taken to Baghdad by Iraqi security forces and was alive.

The media in Iraq gave prominence today to a speech by President Hussein to a mass rally in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul last night.

In one of his strongest statements yet on the Iraqi-Iranian crisis, Mr. Hussein told the Mosul meeting: "It is a good thing to avoid a collision with Iran — unless the collision is a patriotic and national duty."

Arab diplomats in Beirut interpreted the statement as an unmistakable warning that Iraq would use its 229,000-strong army, rated one of the toughest and best-equipped in the Arab World, if Baghdad felt there was no diplomatic way to solve the conflict.

Mr. Hussein issued a fresh call — the third within 10 days — for the withdrawal of Iranian troops from three strategic islands in the Gulf which were occupied by forces of the deposed Shah in 1971.

Two earlier demands for the evacuation of the islands — Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs — were made in messages to United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and to Cuban leader Fidel Castro in his capacity as current chairman of the non-aligned movement.

Arab diplomatic sources in Beirut cautioned against regarding the Iraqi statements as mere rhetoric. "They are determined to show they are exhausting diplomatic means so no one can blame them for resorting to force, if no progress is made," said one diplomat.

In his speech last night, Mr. Hussein also reiterated two other conditions for the revision of relations with Iran: — the return to Iraq of sectors of the Shatt Al Arab Estuary which forms part of its southern border, realigned under a 1975 agreement, and

— the recognition that "the people of Arabistan are Arabs."

Arabistan is the Iraqi term for the Iranian oil-producing province of Khuzestan which has been the target of a string of bomb and grenade attacks on oil installations.

In November 1978, before the Shah fell, President Leonid Brezhnev set out an unexpectedly tough line on Iran when he declared that any interference there would be regarded in Moscow as a matter affecting Soviet security.

The sources said Moscow viewed as favourable the possibility of American warships blockading Iran if the five-month embassy hostage crisis is not resolved. Iranian leaders could not afford to reject Soviet blandishments, they said.

The Kremlin organ charged he was a "political charlatan" as the alleged build-up could not have been spotted by American spy satellites or listening posts. The real threat to Iran lay in the U.S.'s ships "bristling with guns and rockets" off Iran, it said.

The angry Pravda sally was in response to a television interview given yesterday by Mr. Brzezinski where he said there was a similarity with the gradual concentration of forces north of Afghanistan. There are now some 80,000 Soviet troops there, according to American estimates.

Yesterday the Pentagon said the Soviet Union had sent a new landing ship with an estimated 400 commandos on board to the Indian Ocean, but there was no comment on this in Moscow.

Diplomatic sources in Moscow said the reported troop movements could be manoeuvres designed to remind the Tehran authorities — who have frequently criticised Moscow's incursion into Afghanistan — of their powerful northern neighbour.

But they said it was hard to envisage any circumstance when troops would move into Iran — a step which was bound to destroy a situation basically favourable to the Soviet Union.

Theoretically Moscow was given the right by a 1921 treaty to send troops into Iran if its territory were to be used as a base for operations against the Soviet Union.

To meet May 26 deadline Egypt, Israel to start nonstop autonomy talks

WASHINGTON, April 16 (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin said today he and President Carter had made real progress in moving towards their goal of full autonomy for the Palestinians of West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

President Carter announced at the end of two days of talks with Mr. Begin that autonomy negotiations would be intensified and held in Egypt and Israel during the next 40 days.

Both leaders expressed optimism that an agreement on Palestinian autonomy could be reached by May 26, the date set when Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in Washington 13 months ago.

With Mr. Begin at his side, President Carter said: "We are delighted at the progress that has been made."

"We have along way to go before full agreement," Mr. Carter added. "...I think we have made progress towards our goal."

Mr. Begin said: "I think we made real progress and all of us will do our utmost to bring about an agreement which will make it possible to install full autonomy for the Palestinians..."

President Carter also said Israel and Egypt would negotiate practically every hour over the next 40 days.

"There is hope indeed that we may reach that goal," he said.

President Carter told reporters that he and the prime minister had concluded very constructive and productive talks on Palestinian autonomy.

He said the intensified negotiations would take place in Egypt and Israel at the suggestion of Mr. Begin and with the approval of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who met the U.S. leader in Washington last week.

Later at a news conference, Mr. Begin was asked how the nonstop negotiations could succeed when 10 rounds over more than 10 months have not resolved key issues. He replied:

"When you negotiate there are always two possibilities: You may reach an agreement and you may not reach an agreement. Why be pessimistic in advance?"

Besides, Mr. Begin said, May 26 is only a goal — not a deadline or

even a target date. "We shall negotiate every day," he said. "Maybe, in those 40 days, as we hope, we may reach an agreement. If we do, we shall rejoice in it."

"If we don't, it may happen, then the simple conclusion is that we shall continue our talks," Mr. Begin said.

Mr. Carter and President Sadat said last week the talks should be held in Washington, but Mr. Begin yesterday proposed they take place alternately in Tel Aviv and Alexandria, Egypt.

American officials said constructive work had been done on the key issues during the first two meetings yesterday, which lasted for four hours. But they gave no hint of a breakthrough.

In a toast at a White House state dinner last night, both Mr. Begin and President Carter expressed confidence the obstacles could be overcome but made clear there was a long way to go.

The president said he and Mr. Begin had agreed earlier in the day that they had faced more difficult challenges in the past during the 1978 Camp David negotiations over a Middle East peace framework and the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

"But when he and I and President Sadat have set our minds to overcoming obstacles or answering a difficult question, so far, and I knock on wood, we have never failed," he said. "It would be a tragedy, having come this far, to fail," he added.

Mr. Begin responded: "We now face difficulties and we shall solve them... we shall do our best."

Soviet Union denies massing troops on border with Iran

MOSCOW, April 16 (R) — The Soviet Union denied today it was massing troops on its border with Iran, and scorned American charges that it was threatening Tehran's revolutionary regime.

The Communist Party newspaper Pravda said White House National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski had concocted reports of a troop build-up in the Trans-Caucasian military region, which adjoins Iran's Azerbaijan province.

The Kremlin organ charged he was a "political charlatan" as the alleged build-up could not have been spotted by American spy satellites or listening posts. The real threat to Iran lay in the U.S.'s ships "bristling with guns and rockets" off Iran, it said.

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Carter to impose new economic, political sanctions against Iran soon

WASHINGTON, April 16 (Agencies) — President Carter is likely to impose new economic and political sanctions against Iran this week because of the continued detention of 50 American hostages in Tehran, administration officials said today.

One official hinted that an announcement could come as early as tomorrow, when Mr. Carter has scheduled a nationally-televised press conference.

At the same time, officials denied a report that the president had made a decision to impose a naval blockade against Iran early next month if the hostages were not released by them.

The Boston Globe said the United States had passed word to its allies and to Iran that it was prepared to impose a blockade if economic and diplomatic sanctions failed to break the stalemate over the hostages, who were seized by militants on Nov. 4.

White House Press Secretary Jody Powell said the report was incorrect. "No decision to impose a blockade has been made or communicated," he said.

Officials also said the president hoped that U.S. allies would respond positively by mid-May to his request for non-military actions on their part to support the measures he was taking against Iran.

Discussing possible U.S. action later, they said that while the president had not made a decision to impose a naval blockade, he had not ruled out any of the choices available to him in his efforts to

secure the release of the hostages. But a decision on a blockade was not likely to be made until after mid-May, they said.

Officials said President Carter did not intend to retaliate against any ally that declined to cooperate with him in his actions against Iran, but said he earnestly hoped all would support him at a critical time for the United States.

The White House was studying a statement by the leader of a hardline faction in Iran's Revolutionary Council that the country's future parliament might not debate the fate of the hostages until July, some two months later than originally planned.

Concern was expressed over the remarks by Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, but beyond that the White House withheld immediate comment.

Ayatollah Beheshti, asked when the yet-to-be-elected Iranian parliament would discuss the hostage crisis, told a weekly press briefing: "Perhaps in June or July." He did not elaborate.

Ayatollah Beheshti said it might be possible for Iran to pardon the hostages without a trial if what he called "the political background" to the crisis was resolved.

"A pardon could be given to the hostages after the political background is resolved," he said, adding that the United Nations commission which visited Iran last month to investigate the alleged crimes of the deposed Shah might help in this respect.



These pictures were taken during the April 13 session of the fourth summit conference of the "Confrontation and Steadfastness Front" which ended in Tripoli Tuesday with agreement to establish a unified military force to be stationed in Syria. Reading from top these pictures show: President Abdel Fattah Ismail of South Yemen (left) and his delegation; President Hafez Al-Assad of Syria (centre) and his delegation; President Chadli Benjedid of Algeria (left) and his delegation. (AP wirephoto)



File portrait of French philosopher and novelist Jean Paul Sartre gesturing during a recent press conference in Paris. The 75-year-old Sartre, whose philosophy of existentialism at first aroused political arguments, but thereafter, dominated much of European cultural life after World War II, died Tuesday night of a lung ailment. See page 6. (AP wirephoto)

Jordan Times

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 Fax: 21497 Al Rai JO
 Cables: JORTIMES, Amman, Jordan.
 The Jordan Times is published daily except Mondays.
 Advertising and subscription rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

More is less

PRESIDENT Carter and Israeli Premier Menachem Begin have been busy congratulating each other on the marvellous progress achieved so far in their earnest attempt to decide "the future of the Palestinians." Mr. Begin, for his part, has opted to think positive and add a further illusion of progress by suggesting that Israel and Egypt should burn the midnight oil between now and May 26 to conjure up an agreement on "autonomy." President Carter, meanwhile, has used Mr. Begin's visit to try and get across to American voters how successful his master-stroke of diplomacy in the Middle East has been.

There's considerably less here -- yet, at the same time, considerably more -- than meets the eye.

Less because there is little doubt that Egypt and Israel remain poles apart in their respective interpretations of autonomy. Any agreement they may reach simply in order to produce something by May 26 is likely to be window-dressing. The peace treaty between them will remain what it is: a disengagement and mutual accommodation agreement between them.

More because both Mr. Begin and Mr. Carter have used this occasion to underscore their hard-line attitudes against any interpretation of autonomy other than their own. Mr. Begin made clear on his arrival in Washington that autonomy did not mean that Israel would relinquish control of any part of the occupied territories; Mr. Carter came out of a meeting with Mr. Begin to reiterate that the U.S. remained adamantly opposed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, that it would never talk to the Palestine Liberation Organisation until the PLO "accepted Resolution 242 and recognised Israel's right to exist," and that the U.S. shared Israel's determination that Jerusalem should remain undivided.

Mr. Carter cited all these as virtuous and helpful positions adopted by the U.S. to speed the peace process along. And it is obviously the mechanism of Camp David which provides for these policies, and for Mr. Begin's interpretation of autonomy, to be implemented according to the American and Israeli plan. Mr. Begin has reaffirmed Israel's determination to adhere strictly to the letter of the Camp David accords; he does so in the full knowledge that those accords do not mention Jerusalem, do not mention settlements and do not put anything more than lip service to the "rights" of the Palestinians.

Autonomy under occupation is not the same as freedom. "Self-governing" under occupation is not the same as being independent. Limited local administration under occupation is not the same as national sovereignty.

Carter knows this. Begin knows this. President Sadat knows but pretends not to. They can have their progress. For they will find there is very little they can do with all the progress they are able to summon up. As far as the national struggle of the Palestinians for freedom and human dignity is concerned, nothing will change either before or after May 26.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARY

AL RA'Y: The U.N. Security Council faces a new test now that the southern Lebanon problem has been returned to it. This problem is a bomb that Israel explodes every once in a while for its nuisance value and to achieve a number of objectives. These include forestalling the return of Lebanese stability, weakening Arab countries waging a campaign of terror and attacking U.N. forces to prevent them from restoring Lebanese sovereignty to the border regions.

This bomb with which Israel is playing cannot be defused simply by a new Security Council resolution. The Council has issued resolutions before in attempts to dismantle it, and has sent forces to southern Lebanon for this purpose; but it has had no success. It simply provided the Israeli forces and the right-wing militias with a new target, while the problem of the south remained unresolved.

The Security Council's failure in the current test would encourage others to continue their violation of international practices in other parts of the world. If the world community fails in imposing its will and gaining respect in South Lebanon, it will not be able to make its presence known when the U.S. wishes it to do so. This fact may help Washington to take a position that will enable the Council to dismantle the bomb in Israel's hands.

AL DUSTOUR: In the absence of any firm and serious Arab-Islamic move, the occupation authorities are now attempting to implement their plot to change the Arab and Islamic character of occupied Jerusalem.

The announcement by Israel's Rabbinic Council rejecting any sovereignty but Israel's over Arab Jerusalem comes as digging and excavating operations around Al Aqsa Mosque and in its courtyards continue. This shows up forcefully the Zionist conspiracy against Al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock.

This blatant Zionist challenge should be met with more than mere words, because it threatens the holy places of Islam. Muslim scholars and thinkers in Jordan exposed Tuesday the dimensions of the Zionist conspiracy and the reasons for Israel's attempts to seize Islamic sanctuaries, and called upon the Arab and Islamic World to confront the plot.

Israel poisons Arab crops

TEL AVIV, April 16 (Agencies) Opposition members of parliament today requested an investigation of the poisoning of Arab crops by Israeli authorities.

The incident surfaced earlier this week when several West Bank village leaders complained that about 100 acres of fields were ruined by Israeli planes spraying chemicals on West Bank land.

The Labour and Sha'i party members of parliament's foreign affairs and security committee met committee chairman Moshe Arens to urge that the committee investigate the matter.

According to press reports, the spraying occurred several weeks ago in an area south of Hebron and near Israel's border. The Israeli lands administration, which was responsible for the action, claimed it sought to destroy crops which were planted illegally by West Bankers inside Israel.

But Israeli newspapers quoted government officials as admitting that the planes, perhaps mistakenly, sprayed fields in the West Bank.

Village leaders in Dura, Amaziah and Idna said the spray ruined wheat and barley fields and an olive grove. They complained to the Israeli military government, which ordered an investigation.

Parliament deputy Meir Talmi of the Labour-affiliated Mapam Party said the legislators had been forced to rely on press reports of the incident and wanted all the facts surrounding the affair presented to parliament.

Meanwhile, 26 Arab residents in the West Bank village of Beit

Ummar, north of Hebron, appealed today to the Israeli supreme court for an injunction to halt expansion of an Israeli settlement on land that belongs to them.

They said the year-old settlement of Migdal Oz was planning to put up additional buildings on land that was expropriated from them by the Israeli occupation authorities for military purposes.

The court has agreed to hear the case in the near future.

Arab students ask release of colleagues by Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, April 16 (R) -- Arab student representatives from the occupied West Bank and Israel demanded today the release of 30 of their colleagues arrested by the Israeli authorities during protest demonstrations in the past week.

The representatives told a press

conference that the Israelis were holding 22 students from Najah University in Nablus, six from Birzeit and two from Abu Dis Universities.

The Arab delegates from Israel said they will demonstrate tomorrow to express solidarity with students in the occupied territories.

JD 15m French telcoms loan agreement concluded

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN, April 16--Minister of Communications Mohammad 'Adoub Al Zaben today signed a JD 15,247,575 loan agreement with a consortium of eight French banks to finance most of the Telecommunications Corporation's (TCC's) massive project to extend telecommunications into Jordan's rural areas.

The loan is part of a JD 20 million financial protocol with the French government that is being used for telecommunications services in Jordan. The TCC has floated a tender on the French market inviting contractors to bid on projects for extending and modernising telephone systems in most of the north of the country and in the Jordan Valley, the TCC's Director General, Mr. Mohammad Shuhed Ismail, told the Jordan Times today.

"The modern and most up-to-date fully electronic integrated digital techniques to be offered by French manufacturers and contractors through these agreements will enable the TCC for the first time to provide automatic telephone services to the vast majority of the rural areas, including some 420 villages.



The Minister of Communications, Dr. Mohammad 'Adoub Al Zaben (left), shakes hands with Mr. Eric Girardin after signing the JD 15 million French loan for financing projects of the Telecommunications Corporation. TCC Director General Mohammad Shuhed Ismail (far right) looks on.

"This is part of the TCC's policy to extend a wide scale of services deep into the rural areas as well as the main towns and centres," Mr. Ismail said.

Provisions of the loan include a repayment period of 10 years at 7.5 per cent interest plus one-half per cent interest for loan insurance. A grace period is provided equal to the time of construction, which should be completed about 30 months after contracts are awarded and work begins. This will be about mid-September, Mr. Ismail told the Jordan Times

tonight. Repayment of the loan is to be made in 20 semi-annual instalments.

Signing the loan today on behalf of the banks was Mr. Eric Girardin, representing Banque Francaise du Commerce Extérieur (BFCE), which leads the eight-member consortium. The other banks are: Banque de l'Indochine et de Suez, Banque de Paris et de Pays-Bas, Banque Nationale de Paris, Societe Generale, Union de Banques Arabes et Francaises, Al Saudi Banque, and Arab Bank Limited.

Arab, Latin American news agencies hold talks

DAMASCUS, April 16 (JNA) -- Arab and Latin American news agencies concluded three days of talks here this evening with agreement on a number of topics.

The participants approved plans to conclude cooperative agreements between Arab and Latin American news agencies for the exchange of news items, pictures, press services and expertise, and encouraged visits by officials from the two sides to each other's regions. They agreed to prepare a

draft agreement on direct cooperation between Arab and Latin American agencies, in addition to studying the possibility of establishing a centre for receipt and distribution of news from Arab agencies and another centre for Latin American news.

During the conference, the news agencies' directors decided to ask the financially and technologically more experienced and capable news agencies to support the newly-established ones by providing them with expertise and material aid if possible.

They called on Arab and Latin American governments to reduce postal, telegram, telephone and telex rates on information exchanged between Arab and Latin American news agencies by 50 per cent as an "encouragement tariff."

The participants hailed the Arab and Latin American peoples' struggle for independence and liberation from all forms of domination, and affirmed their solidarity with the Palestinian people in their fight to regain their legitimate rights.

The Director General of the Jordan News Agency, Mr. Youssef Abu Leil, in an address to the conference, called for joint cooperation agreements between Arab and Latin American news agencies.

The participants agreed to hold another seminar in Mexico during the coming year.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Goya Exhibition

The Haya Arts Centre and the Spanish Cultural Centre present an exhibition of Canvas copies of paintings by Goya at the Haya Arts Centre Theatre. The exhibition continues until April 17.

Children's Art Exhibition

An exhibition of paintings by three Jordanian teenagers is on display at the Ghazi Arabiyat Hall at the Haya Arts Centre until April 17. The young artists are Christine Naser, Nuri Juha and Shuruk Hamdan.

Collage Exhibition

The French Cultural Centre presents an exhibition of collages by Alecco Saab. The exhibition continues until April 18.

THIRD EDUCATION PROJECT MOBILS SCHOOLS BUILDING MAINTENANCE UNITS. LOAN NO. 1781 / JO

The government of Jordan has received a loan from the World Bank.

The project will comprise equipment for eight mobile maintenance units. Each unit will be self-propelled and built on a truck chassis and is to be equipped for carpentry, smithery, electrical and plumbing work and welding. Bid documents for the units will include complete details and will be issued April 15, 1980. The bid closing date will be June 30, 1980. Bid documents are available at nonrefundable sum of JD. 3,000 or U.S. \$10 or equivalent currency.

Project Implementation Unit
 Ministry of Education
 P.O. Box 9640
 Amman - Jordan

NOTEBOOK

Excitement on the horizon

By Rami G. Khouri

IT IS NO accident that moves towards political decentralisation and power-sharing are underway simultaneously in several Arab states. Consider the following facts:

-- In Jordan, the new government of Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf has pushed hard the concepts of participation, decentralisation and sharing the burden of decision-making more broadly among the people and regions of the country.

-- In Syria, President Assad is involved in a dialogue with recalcitrant sectors of the political spectrum, with the primary aim of broadening the base of the ruling Baath Party and the National Progressive Front and forging a national consensus.

-- In Iraq, the regime of President Saddam Hussein has announced plans to hold elections for a legislature that will be called the National Council, though this parliamentary body will "share" power with the ruling Revolutionary Command Council. A separate legislature will also be elected in the autonomous Kurdish region in the north.

-- In Saudi Arabia, King Khaled has established a nine-man committee to put together the "basic statutes of government", including the regulations for a consultative council that will act as a sort of parliament, in the same spirit as the two-year-old National Consultative Council that exists here in Jordan.

-- In Sudan, President Jaafar Numeiry is pressing ahead with next month's plans for elections to a national assembly and six regional assemblies, both of which will likely include members who have traditionally opposed his ruling regime. The regional assemblies, moreover, will govern regions that will have their own ministers and be responsible for their own budgets.

-- In Kuwait, steps are moving ahead to re-activate the national parliament that was suspended several years ago.

Is it a coincidence that all these Arab states are simultaneously working to establish new institutions that will attempt to bring about fundamental changes in the manner in which political and economic power is exercised?

I think not. Rather, I think the Arab World is moving into one of those periods when the ground is ripe for substantive changes in the relationships between power groups within the body politic. It would be careless for the foreign observer to assume that what is taking place throughout the Arab World is only another phase in this century's parody of the republican institutions of the western industrial democracies. It is probably too much to expect parliamentary or presidential elections in which the winner garners much less than 98.6 per cent of the votes. This appears to be a fixture of the Arab style of participatory democracy with which we must live for many years.

But what is clearly on the horizon of the political landscape is a recognition by the incumbent leaderships and power elites in the Middle East that the area has reached the point where the

rapid advances in socio-economic development have got too far ahead of parallel progress on the political front. The transformation of the Arab World into consumer-oriented, industrialising societies is also tearing the very socio-psychological fabric that has been the cement of stability and durability for the past several hundred, or even thousand, years.

The complexities of contemporary life are such that the traditional systems of reaching or imposing a national political consensus do not work as well as they used to do, particularly when the very meaning of a consensus becomes so deeply intertwined with such factors as the relative freedom of private sector entrepreneurs, the allocation of cushy government jobs, the distribution of infrastructural and educational services among different geographic areas and the access of individuals and groups of people to the decision-making hierarchy.

Any society must have channels by which opinions can be expressed, grievances redressed and collective decisions made collectively. Much of this sort of activity can take place via such channels as political parties, labour unions, an enlightened and responsible press, private pressure groups and lobbies, educational institutions, professional groupings, parliamentary bodies and activist judiciaries. Most of these institutions in the Arab World have developed slowly or not at all during the past 50 years, for reasons that historians are best qualified to discuss.

The present reality is that several Arab countries simultaneously are groping for their own appropriate mechanisms to institutionalise the kind of consensus-building political activity whose absence is accentuated by the disproportionately brisk development of our material standard of living. What is the value of having new telephone exchanges and universities if access to such things is not fairly apportioned according to the checks and balances of an equitable system of legally-based domestic power-sharing?

This is the dilemma that faces the Arab World today, and which is being addressed by different countries in different ways. It is also, one presumes, the dilemma that was not sufficiently addressed in Iran, and which resulted in a violent change in that system of political and economic authority.

One senses that the Arab World is in the midst of historic change, by which ancient societies are being forced to adapt to the circumstances of the present. Those societies with a developed sense of national purpose will make the change smoothly. Those with a fragile psycho-national composite will pass through more violent and turbulent phases. Above all, however, it is the quality of leadership that will dictate the magnitude, durability, legitimacy and authenticity of the changes that take place in the coming decade. That, too, has been the lesson of Iran, and the challenge to the entire Third World. It is probably the most significant -- and exciting -- thing to take place in the Arab World since 1918.

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هكذا من المثل

Bilad Al Sham congress opens Saturday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN, April 16—Can Arabs tell their own history? The Third International Congress on the History of Bilad Al Sham (greater Syria) that will open at the University of Jordan today will be an attempt to answer this question, according to Adnan Bakhit, secretary-general of the congress.

The idea of the Bilad Al Sham congress was initiated by Dr. Bakhit, a professor at the University of Damascus, Department of History. In 1972, Bilad Al Sham, he explained to the Jordan Times yesterday, covers the time and the modern states of Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. "The of the Umayyad caliphate located in these countries, have never been studied on a level but only in patches," he said.

They are united by the Arabic language and their shared traditions and historical experiences, feelings of their people, their of behaviour and their systems of values are almost identical.

However, he continued, these studies have not been studied thoroughly and comprehensively. A proper understanding of their history shouldn't isolate events from the proper framework. The study of this area has been distorted by the manner of study, particularly in the case of Lebanon and Syria.

The focus of this year's congress

will be Palestine. "It will be the largest academic conference on Palestine to date," Dr. Bakhit said.

His Majesty King Hussein will give the opening address at the six-day congress, which will discuss papers presented by the 120 scholars participating, who come from 39 universities in 20 countries. His Highness Crown Prince Hassan will attend all sessions.

The topic of Palestine will be discussed in all its aspects; the conference will not just deal with a certain period of its history. Why Palestine? "Its history has not been written by Arabs in a systematic objective way," explained Dr. Bakhit. "Either it has been written as an emotional reaction or it has been based on research by people whom you wouldn't trust."

Furthermore, the timing of the congress almost coincides with the beginning of the 15th Islamic century. "Jordan by virtue of its position and its responsible leadership wants to commemorate this noble occasion not by slogans and rhetoric, but rather by posing the question: What has happened to the Muslims that they have lost Palestine?" he said.

He described the congress as a "self-critique: a constructive approach aimed at revealing facts rather than begging for sympathy."

A high percentage of the 120 scholars invited to the congress—for which Arabic, English and French are the working languages—are non-Arab. They were invited, he said, "out of our confidence in their scholarship

and without any inhibition on our part because of any preconceived ideas" they may have, he said. "We have invited individual scholars on their merits, rather than as representatives of their universities... we have judged them on their standards of scholarship."

"We don't want to impose our point of view on anybody. We were able to guarantee complete academic freedom to participants in the first congress, and we are able to maintain the same guarantee this year."

The First International Congress on the History of Bilad Al Sham was held at the University of Jordan in April 1974. Opened by King Hussein and chaired by Prince Hassan, it dealt with the history of the area through the 16th century.

At Syria's request, and with the approval of Prince Hassan, the second congress was convened at the University of Damascus in December, 1978. It dealt with the Ottoman era through the Mandate period, ending in 1945. At that congress it was decided that the first two congresses had yielded a "horizontal political survey and that more depth was needed," Dr. Bakhit said. It recommended that further congresses focus on certain themes or countries.

The paper at next week's congress held in cooperation with Yarmouk University, will be divided into eight topics: source matter for the history of Palestine; aspects of Palestinian history; Jerusalem; social, economic and

demographic life; learning institutions; geographical and travelogue literature; Jewish immigration and settlement and Arab reaction to it; and positions and policies of foreign countries toward the Palestine question.

Four committees will work simultaneously in two daily sessions. Each will be expected to cover 30 papers—which will be handed out in advance—during the six-day congress. Each participant will be given 15 minutes to present a synopsis of his paper. All papers on one theme will be heard before discussion of any one takes place, in order to avoid repetition and to preserve the unity of each theme as the scholars exchange ideas. Abstracts of all the papers will be published after the congress.

A number of secondary panel discussions have been arranged, as have side trips around Jordan and meetings with officials for scholars coming from outside the country.

Space permitting, the public is invited to all sessions (held from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 5 - 7:30 p.m.) and to the three exhibitions mounted specially for the occasion, all held at the university's Faculty of Agriculture. One exhibition consists of maps of Palestine contributed by the Jordan Geography Centre; another is a collection of photographs of Palestine in the latter half of the 19th century from Harvard's Semitic Museum; and the third is an exhibition of ancient, rare and modern publications on Palestine.



Five new ambassadors sworn in

AMMAN, April 16 (JNA) — Five newly-appointed Jordanian ambassadors were sworn in before His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court this evening. They are Mr. Ghaleb Barakat, appointed permanent representative to the United Nations, in Geneva, Sharif Fawwaz Sharaf as ambassador to the United States, Mr. Talal Hikmat as ambassador to Canada, Mr. Yasin Istanbuli as ambassador to Algeria and Mr. Saleh Kabarti as ambassador to Bahrain.

The swearing-in was attended by the Chief of the Royal Court, Mr. Ahmad Lawzi, the Royal Court Minister, Mr. Amer Khamash and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mr. Marwan Al Qasem.

Pictured above, from left to right, are Mr. Kabarti, Mr. Istanbuli, Mr. Hikmat, Mr. Sharaf and Mr. Barakat, Mr. Qasem, Mr. Khamash, Mr. Lawzi and King Hussein.

Samer Tabba' sculptures go on show

By Fawzia Mai
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, April 16 — The National Art Gallery has chosen Samer Tabba' as its first exhibition by a Jordanian artist. The artist's 18 sculptures by its name, Mr. Samer Tabba'. But the lover should be deterred from visiting the show by this circumstance — for why a talented young artist be the opportunity to exhibit of the best galleries in town because he happens to be its owner? The official opening is on Sunday.

Tabba' undeniably possesses as well as training. He is a B.A. in sociology, besides, a bachelor's and master's in fine arts. But what may the viewer is his personal

majority of sculptures on recent works, exemplify his current stage of development—the style with which he now identifies.

There are, however, two earlier more showy perhaps, more strongly reflect the style of others. An airy steel sculpture, the one to still retain something of a traditional technique — a top standing on a thin leg, strongly suggestive of an eagle.

Other 16 pieces are all in stone. Mr. Tabba' cannot account for why he identifies so with stone. "I like stones, they are so difficult to work with; because they are so and most probably, I like nature and gradually interested in it more and more."

As it is, the nature of the stones determines the works rather than preconceived ideas in the artist's mind. For instance, a slightly flattened round block of granite with a stellate surface which he discovered along a river, has been cut to produce two contrasting black and shiny, slightly concave surfaces. The stone stands on its convex bottom, and the visitor, who is allowed to feel it to absorb its strength and fullness, may be terrified to see it oscillate, but in a slow and heavy manner.

As a matter of fact, almost all the stones are mobile in one way or another. Some sculptures on a non-horizontal surface; others are built up of several pieces and, on being touched, cause the same scary but unfounded feeling that they may fall over.

Or, as in the case of a huge slab of slate marble (originally the top of a lab table) pierced with holes and other designs, which can be hung from the ceiling, holes and angles are carved out in such a manner that the light playing on them creates a feeling of mobility. It is this association of mobility with the enhanced intrinsic strength of the stone that produces such an eerie attraction.

Mr. Tabba' has tried his hand at a variety of stones. There is a slab of sandstone, dark and reddish brown, which he has turned into a tribute to the tenth century Arab poet Abu Firas Al Hamadani by carving on it Abu Firas' last poem, and decorating the bottom with pointed arches. He calls it Abu Firas' "tombstone".

The one piece that is instantly recognised by any Amman resident is a small block of limestone hidden in a corner shaped into a blend of cubes, with the surface made rough by chisel work. Yes, it's Amman.

A chunk of alabaster exhibits rough and smooth surfaces and a few holes of varying sizes and directions, while a few others are filled in with glue. Two works in coal are admirable in their simplicity and beauty. Another chunk of granite may at first strike one as

an insult to the viewer's intelligence, but appears in a more favourable light once it is explained that it is the artist's "challenge to Naguchi's 'Mountain'" (Naguchi is a famous Japanese-born contemporary sculptor who has, among his other achievements, designed stage sets for Martha Graham).

A lime-stone work that suggests a totem pole is constructed of five pieces, and carved into irregular contours and surfaces. Another and even more huge limestone work is made of 18 pieces placed here and there, some lying horizontally on top of two vertical pieces. It is even more strongly reminiscent of the natural environment of limestone. On these stones, Mr. Tabba' has carved designs as they came to him, including the "evil eye" that is so intrinsic to Arab culture.

Samer Tabba', a Saudi Arabian born in Taif in 1945, spent only the first six years of his life in Saudi Arabia. He studied in Syria and Lebanon before moving at the age of 18 to the United States, where he stayed for 15 years. He only returned to Amman, where his

School closed because of mumps outbreak

IRBID, April 16 (JT) — A school in Irbid Governorate was closed after 105 boys and girls were found suffering from mumps.

According to Dr. Radwan Hindawi, director of the Health Department in Irbid, the affected children must be isolated in bed for several days since infection spreads through breathing.

Dr. Hindawi was quoted by Al-Rai newspaper as saying that the infected children, aged between seven and 14, constitute more than one quarter of the total number of children at the Adasiyah school, thus justifying its closure for 10 days.

parents live. In 1979. Since then, he has been busy setting up a studio, has produced two works (including the piece "Amman") and become director of the National Gallery.

AMMAN, April 16 (JT)—His Majesty King Hussein today sent a cable of good wishes to President Hafez Al Assad of Syria on the 34th anniversary of the French pullout from Syrian territory. French troops left Syria in 1946 at the end of the League of Nations mandate.

ZARQA, April 16 (JNA)—Zarqa Municipality today presented its 1980 budget totalling JD 241,330 to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment for approval. According to the city's Mayor, Mr. Salameh Al Ghuweifi, the budget contains funds for carrying out various projects and for improving public services in Zarqa. He said these mainly cover the construction and maintenance of roads, improving the water system, building parks and a new slaughterhouse, providing facilities for garbage collection and disposal and the building of water towers. One of the projects, the construction of an overpass at the entrance of the Zarqa refugee camp, started last week. Its estimated is nearly JD 50,000.

AMMAN, April 16 (JT)—Representatives of six Arab League organisations today ended a three-day organisational meeting here on the preparation of a geological map of mineral resources in the Arab World. The participants in the meeting recommended preparing such a map as soon as possible. They also recommended that the Arab Organisation for Mineral Resources hold periodic meetings to review progress in charting the map and stressed the need to make a survey of mineral resources in each Arab state. They called on Arab states to make surveys of mineral resources in off-shore regions as well, and to exchange information and data on development in this field. The meeting was organised and sponsored by the Arab League's Council of Arab Economic Unity.

RAMTHA, April 16 (JNA)—The Minister of Health, Dr. Zuhairi Malhas, yesterday opened a new JD 100,000 wing at this city's government hospital. The new wing raises the capacity of the hospital from 29 to 56 beds and includes a new operating theatre, two surgery wards, a maternity ward as well as clinics for the treatment of internal diseases and for obstetrics/gynaecology. The new wing opened its doors yesterday following the ceremony, which was attended by the minister of tourism, the undersecretary of the health ministry and a number of other officials.

AMMAN, April 16 (JNA)—A five-day seminar on labourers' cooperatives in the Arab World will open in Amman next Tuesday.

Local News Briefs

At the seminar, organised by the Arab Labour Organisation, participants will discuss the problem of housing for labourers in Arab states and the question of financing housing projects. Taking part in the seminar will be representatives from most Arab states, the Arab Labour Organisation and Arab and international agencies concerned with cooperative movements.

AMMAN, April 16 (JT)—13 Arab states will take part in a seminar on standardisation which is due to open here on Saturday at the headquarters of the Arab Organisation of Standardisation and Metrology. The organisation's Secretary General, Dr. Zafer Al Sawwaf, told Al-Rai newspaper the delegates will present working papers and research projects outlining Arab standardisation systems, and will discuss unifying these systems based on experience gained from those in force throughout the developed world. Taking part in the seminar will be delegates from Jordan, The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and North and South Yemen.

ZARQA, April 16 (JNA)—Police here today apprehended a gang of burglars who carried out a number of robberies in the past few days. According to a police spokesman, the four-member gang admitted breaking into several stores, the city's chamber of commerce and the Awajan post office, where they got away with a calculator and a tape recorder among other things. All stolen items have now been restored to their owners and the gang will be referred to trial in Zarqa, the spokesman said.

AMMAN, April 16 (JNA)—The military governor today endorsed sentences passed by the military court on three merchants for violating Supply Ministry regulations. Each will be imprisoned for one month. The court also fined the female store owner JD 35 for violating supply regulations.

AMMAN, April 16 (JNA)—The Minister of Social Development, Mrs. In'am Mufti, left here for Baghdad this evening for a five-day official visit to Iraq. Mrs. Mufti will continue talks on cooperation with Iraq in social development, labour and labourers, vocational training, social security and the exchange of expertise and visits in preparation for concluding bilateral agreements in this respect. Talks on these subjects began last April. Mrs. Mufti is heading a four-member delegation.

TODAY'S WEATHER

Another rise in temperature will occur, with light and variable winds. In Aqaba, it will be dusty, with northerly moderate wind and calm seas.

	Overnight	Daytime
	low	high
Amman	6	20
Aqaba	11	29
Deserts	5	23
Jordan Valley	8	28

LOCAL EXCHANGE RATES

U.S. dollar	305.50	307.00
U.K. sterling	669.00	673.00
West German mark	161.10	162.10
Swiss franc	172.60	173.60
French franc	69.70	70.10
Italian lire		
(for every 100)	34.80	34.80
Japanese yen		
(for every 100)	120.60	121.50
Dutch guilder	147.20	148.10
Swedish crown	69.20	69.60
Belgian franc	100.50	101.10

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE REPORT

Company	Number Traded	High	Low	Closing Price
Union Insurance Co.	JD 1,000	1,550	1,550	1,550
Amman Development and Investment	JD 2,000	1,430	1,430	1,430
Bank	JD 1,000	2,400	2,400	2,400
Bank	JD 1,000	1,450	1,450	1,450
Bank	JD 1,000	2,320	2,320	2,320
Bank	JD 1,000	1,370	1,370	1,370
Bank	JD 10,000	15,500	15,500	15,500
Bank	JD 1,000	1,050	1,050	1,050
Bank	JD 1,000	3,300	3,300	3,300
Bank	JD 1,000	6,600	1,000	1,000
Bank	JD 1,000	61,200	1,000	0,990
Bank	JD 1,000	2,650	1,240	1,120
Bank	JD 1,000	3,910	2,030	2,030
Bank	JD 1,000	1,280	1,280	1,280
Bank	JD 1,000	280	1,260	1,260
Bank	JD 1,000	3,500	3,500	3,500
Bank	JD 5,000	250	9,700	9,700

Volume Traded on Wednesday, April 16, 1980: JD 98,027

number of shares traded: 81,118

Government Development Bonds

Company	Par Value	Number Traded	Volume Traded	High	Low
Company	JD 10,000	1235	12350	10,000	10,000

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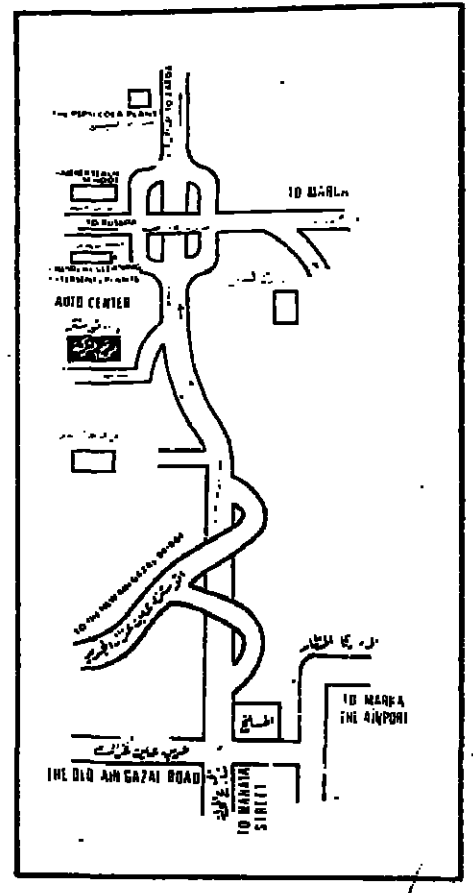
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9. Sales of new cars include all the VW range — The Beetle, Golf, Audi and all vans and pickups.



OPEC pushes for gas price increase

LONDON, April 16 (R) — OPEC countries and other producers are pushing up the price of natural gas, conscious that as the world tries to use less oil the gas will be in growing demand. Iran and Algeria, hardliners in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on the subject of crude oil prices, are the biggest producers of gas after the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

They are also leading the effort to claw the price of gas up to levels equivalent to that of oil in terms of energy produced, as expressed in British thermal units (BTUs).

Iran's chief customer is the Soviet Union which is at present refusing to pay a new price of \$3.63 dollar per million BTU, roughly a fivefold increase on the 76 cents which Iran charged under the shah. Negotiations in March were said by both parties to have been inconclusive, with the Soviet side offering to pay a price no higher than \$2.66 dollars.

The Iranians answer was to say that they would sooner use the gas themselves or burn it off, rather than accept the Soviet offer.

Oil minister Mr. Ali Akbar Moinefar did say agreement was reached on the volume of gas to be piped into the southern Soviet Union through the Irgat-one pipeline — between 2 and 2.5 billion cubic metres a year, sharply

down on the 10 billion supplied under the shah's rule.

Under the shah, plans were also in hand for a second pipeline to double this volume, enabling the Soviet Union, in turn, to export more Soviet gas to west Europe, chiefly to West Germany.

Although Iran says this project is now off, oil industry sources said they believe that work on a related scheme is continuing and they would not rule out that Irgat-two could one day be revived. The sources said they presumed that lasting accord on pricing would be among the first preconditions.

Algeria, a pioneer in the liquefaction of natural gas and its transport by tanker rather than pipeline, seeks to charge U.S., French and other European buyers \$6 per million BTU. Again, the customers have balked. The U.S. El Paso company, contracted to take 10 billion cubic metres a year for 25 years, said it was unable to pay and Algeria suspended supplies on April 1. Gaz de France, Algeria's other big customer, refused to agree to pay more than \$3.

Lesser Algerian customers such as Belgium and the Netherlands await the outcome of the El Paso and Gaz de France negotiations, in which the next step is expected to be the arrival in Algiers of a

U.S. government delegation next Monday. Oil industry analysts in London said both sides were gambling. The Algerians counted on the developing energy crisis to make gas a sellers' market.

Their customers counted on a surplus of alternative fuel oil during the summer when demand is slack, which would enable them to hold out until such time as Algeria began to feel the loss of gas revenue. Analysts said that, even at El Paso's current price of \$1.95 a BTU, the Algerians were losing nearly \$2 million a day.

OPEC's case is that unless gas plays more of a role, the world will not cope with the crisis posed by declining reserves of crude oil. Gas gathering systems, pipelines and liquefaction plants, however, require huge investment and so, it contends, the price must rise.

OPEC producers are at present flaring off gas equivalent to about 2.2 million barrels of oil a day, about the volume of oil produced by the North Sea — an "utter waste... of a clean primary energy source," said OPEC secretary general Mr. Rene Ortiz.

Non-OPEC producers which have raised gas prices this year include Canada and Mexico, which both raised delivered prices to the United States by 25 per cent to \$4.47 million BTU.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON, April 16 (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at the close of trading on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets today.

One sterling	2.2180/2200	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1893/96	Canadian dollar
	1.8635/55	West German marks
	2.0400/5	Dutch guilders
	1.7300/50	Swiss francs
	30.00/10	Belgian francs
	4.3100/3300	French francs
	870.00/875.00	Italian lire
	248.50/249.50	Japanese yen
	4.4005/15	Swedish crowns
	5.0550/0600	Norwegian crowns
	5.8000/8200	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	526.00/529.	U.S. dollars

LONDON STOCK MARKET

LONDON, April 16 (R) — The market closed higher after relatively quiet trading, dealers said.

Government bonds closed with gains stretching to 1/4 point ahead of tomorrow's tender for the new long 'tap' stock. News that Chase Manhattan Bank had lowered its prime rate to 19 1/4 per cent caused a late extension of earlier gains and prompted some speculation that tomorrow's issue might be oversubscribed. Industrials attracted buying demand and more than erased initial losses. Gold shares finished as much as \$1 1/4 firmer with the bullion price.

U.S. and Canadian stocks ended mixed. Burmah ended 7p higher after results while other oils included Lasso and Tricentrol up 20p and 10p respectively but BP 2p weaker. Major banks were 2p to 5p firmer while Standard Chartered recovered 7p of yesterday's fall.

RTZ gained 15p and Hawker 2p after figures. Unilever rose 10p with advances ranging to 3p seen in Beecham, Fisons, ICI, Courtauld, Marks and GKN.

Chase drops interest rate

NEW YORK, April 16 (R) — The Chase Manhattan Bank today announced a cut in its prime lending rate. The bank said the rate would be reduced from 20 per cent, a record high level, to 19.75 per cent, with immediate effect.

Interest rates in all major American banks had been at record high levels in recent weeks, making the dollar attractive to investors and tending to drive other countries towards putting up their own interest rates. The cut by Chase Manhattan was expected to be followed by similar moves in other big U.S. banks.

Interest rates have been high as a method of fighting inflation, but they have aroused fears in some quarters that recession could be made worse by lack of credit. Observers pointed out today that the decrease by Chase Manhattan still leaves its lending rate at an extremely high level.

Bangladesh stresses agriculture

DACCA, April 16 (R) — World Bank President Robert McNamara is arriving here tomorrow on a 48-hour visit to discuss with President Zia Rahman and his ministers the salient features of a new \$20 million five-year development plan Bangladesh is expecting to launch late this year.

Bangladesh is asking the World Bank and other affluent nations in the West and the Middle East to finance more than eighty per cent of the amount involved in the new plan, a senior official said here today.

The official declined to give an outline of the strategies of the new plan saying that those were

"still being worked out", but added that population control and a major thrust in stepping up the farm output would be its "central theme".

The World Bank is the biggest contributor to over a billion dollars that Bangladesh pools each year from a consortium of rich nations in order to finance its deficit economy.

Oil spot market prices rise

ROTTERDAM, April 16 (R) — Nervousness about the political outlook in the Middle East has caused the price of crude oil and oil products to rise on the Rotterdam spot market, market sources said today.

Oil not sold under long term contract is freely traded on the world's spot markets often at prices above those fixed by member-states of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which have sometimes followed its lead in fixing their rates.

The market had been depressed, reflecting a modest glut. But the sources said that, in the past week, prices for heavier Middle East Gulf crudes had risen about 50 cents a barrel from levels between \$34 and \$35. The sources said that little oil was at present being traded so that buying interest stimulated by Middle East worries tended to have an exaggerated effect on the price.

Industry sources said in London that Japan has been buying heavily on spot markets, at a rate of about 300,000 barrels of crude oil a day in February. These sources said this suggested Japan would be vulnerable if uncertainty over Iran sends spot prices higher.

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سكنا سوليد

6,000 remain inside Havana embassy Cuban refugee group arrives in Costa Rica

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, April 16 (AP) — The first group of 150 Cuban refugees arrived in San Jose today at the start of an airlift of almost 11,000 persons who had swarmed into the grounds of the Peruvian embassy in Havana to escape from President Fidel Castro's communist rule of their homeland.

"This is an important psychological symbol, to get this air bridge started," said Mr. Carlos Aguilar of the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry.

Costa Rican authorities refused to give further travel details. It was not determined if the 150, who arrived aboard two Costa Rican airliners, were part of 300 Costa Rica is taking, or will continue on to Peru, which was agreed to give asylum to 1,000 of the refugees.

The Cuban Government had been haggling with the governments of Costa Rica and Peru over the order in which the people would be allowed to leave, but Peru's dispute was apparently resolved late yesterday. However, the differences between Cuba and Costa Rica were not cleared up yet, officials said.

More than half of the would-be

refugees have been spoken for, including up to 3,500 by the United States, 1,000 by Peru, 500 by Spain, 200 by Ecuador, 300 by Costa Rica and undetermined numbers by Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Belgium, West Germany and Sweden.

However, there was no word if Cuba had approved other exit visas, how often flights out of Havana would be scheduled and how long it might take to airlift all the Cubans seeking to leave.

"All 10,000 would like to go to Miami, but we can't satisfy everyone," said one Costa Rican official.

Costa Rica has offered to serve as a staging area for the refugees until they can be relocated, but has said only 300 can remain permanently. The others would be given a maximum of six weeks to

find homes elsewhere. President Rodrigo Carazo told a news conference last night. Sleeping and eating facilities were put up near the airport for the refugees.

Government sources said the Castro government was insisting on selecting the refugees allowed to settle in Costa Rica while the Costa Rican Government wanted to pick them on the basis of interview. A Foreign Ministry official said priority would be given to those with relatives in Costa Rica.

Peruvian officials counted 10,800 Cubans crammed inside the embassy compound within 72 hours after Dr. Castro removed the police guard April 4 because of the death of a policeman killed when a group of Cubans seeking refuge crashed a stolen bus through the embassy gates.

Some 4,000 left the embassy to wait for the evacuation and 450 others decided not to leave Cuba and returned home. An estimated 6,000, including pregnant women, children and old people, remain packed into the compound. They are reported suffering from a shortage of food and water and poor sanitary conditions.

Yesterday, for the second consecutive day, Granma, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, called for mass rallies in front of the embassies of Peru, Venezuela, where another 16 Cubans seeking asylum took refuge, and Switzerland, which houses the U.S. interests section. The United States has no diplomatic relations with Cuba, thus no embassy of its own.

The paper called for demonstrations of at least a million persons each in front of the three embassies on April 19 — anniversary of the U.S.-backed abortive invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 — May 1 and May 16.

China appoints two vice-premiers

PEKING, April 16 (R) — The standing committee of China's parliament today appointed two new vice-premiers, Mr. Zhao Ziyang and Mr. Wan Li, the New China News Agency (NCNA) reported.

It also said a full meeting of the parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC) would be held in August.

Mr. Zhao, 61, was formerly the party chief of Sichuan, China's most populous province and one of the richest. He is regarded in diplomatic circles as a potential future premier.

He was appointed a member of the Communist Party standing committee at a plenum in February, placing him seventh in the party hierarchy.

Mr. Wan, 64 and a native of the east China province of Shandong, was vice-mayor of Peking before

being purged at the start of the cultural revolution in 1966.

An economic expert, he was named railways minister in 1975 and then served as party first secretary in the eastern province of Anhui from 1977 until coming to Peking recently. He was named a member of the secretariat of the national party at the February plenum.

The appointments of both men to the rank of vice-premier had been expected, with Senior Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping stressing the need to promote younger men to top posts.

Mr. Deng, 76, has been quoted as saying he would like to retire from his vice-premier's position this year if the NPC permitted it. He would, however, retain his post as vice-chairman and number three in the party ranks.

Japan's crippling strike ends

TOKYO, April 16 (R) — A crippling transport and public services strike ended tonight after 20 hours, during which it affected more than 21 million passengers throughout Japan.

The strike was originally due to last for three days but unions of the state-owned Japan National Railway (JNR) and other government corporations ended it early although wage disputes at issue were not formally settled, union officials said.

The back-to-work decision followed a wage settlement earlier in the day for most private railway companies. Their unions accepted wage rises averaging 6.72 per cent, compared with their original demand for 7.34 per cent, after striking for only 100 minutes.

JNR workers resumed operating commuter trains in Tokyo and other big cities this evening and the whole JNR system was expected to return to normal tomorrow, a JNR union spokesman said.

The JNR unions said they had decided reluctantly to accept wage increases averaging 6.4 per cent.

Officials of the Council of Public Corporation and National Enterprise Workers Unions (Korokyo), to which the national rail unions belong, said the wage-dispute had still not been settled formally.

They said Korokyo as a whole, which had been demanding more than eight per cent for the railmen, had rejected the average 6.4 per cent offer because it was smaller than the increase agreed by the private railways.

But Korokyo sources said the rejection was only a gesture by the council to show its dissatisfaction with the offer. The unions would formally accept it after mediation efforts were resumed in the next few days, they said.

Unions of municipal transport



Princess Beatrix (centre) with Prince Claus and Queen Juliana (AFP photo)

Princess Beatrix sees upcoming role as Dutch queen primarily as a duty

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands, April 16 (AP) — Princess Beatrix, who will become queen of the Netherlands April 30, sees the first five years of her reign as a period of learning the job.

For guidance, she will look to her mother, Queen Juliana, the best-informed woman in the country, she told Dutch newspaper editors recently in an informal meeting. Queen Juliana always looked on the bright side of things and never became frustrated during the 31 years of her reign, the princess said.

Queen Juliana announced Jan. 31, Princess Beatrix's 42nd birthday, that she would step aside April 30, her own 71st birthday.

The princess said she saw her

admitted that inauguration day will be a day of tension for her because her life will change dramatically afterwards.

Her family will miss the relatively free life of her years as crown princess, she told the editors. She said she did not see her inauguration as a day of celebration for her because of the heavy responsibilities she would assume.

But she said she would regret it if others did not enjoy it, in a reference to threats by squatters to disrupt the inauguration.

Amsterdam's squatters, angry at what they see as a lack of action by city authorities to solve the chronic housing shortage, have taken up the motto "no housing, no crowning." Early this month, 300 demonstrators marched

through the city centre and hurled smoke bombs at the royal palace.

Princess Beatrix told the newspaper editors there was no logical connection between the inauguration and the housing problem. As queen, she said, she could not solve the problem.

The princess and her husband Prince Claus, who also met with the editors, said they believed the discontent was aimed at the government, and that the monarchy was the government's most obvious target.

Soon after the inauguration, the new queen and her husband will pay brief official visits to all the Dutch provinces. They hope to visit the Dutch Antilles later this year.

France mourns death of Sartre

PARIS, April 16 (R) — France today mourned left-wing philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre, described by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as "one of the great luminaries of our time."

News of Mr. Sartre's death in a Paris hospital broke shortly before midnight, but morning papers remade their front pages to run long obituaries under heavy black headlines in late editions.

"The immense Sartre bestrode the century as Voltaire and Hugo did theirs," said the editorial of Liberation, the leftist daily founded by Mr. Sartre.

"He was one of the rare truly free men of our era, one of the few honest men in a time of trouble and impotence," said the socialist daily Le Matin.

One of the first tributes to the 74-year-old "father of existentialism" came from the Elysee Palace.

Mr. Giscard d'Estaing said that as Mr. Sartre refused all official honours, "it would not be fitting that the president's homage should appear to go against this intimate choice."

He went on: "But as a young reader of his work during the war years and at the liberation, his death to me means the disappearance of one of the great luminaries of our time."

Mr. Sartre's later years were lived in the shadow of ill-health, and failing sight meant that he could no longer read or write.

It was a frail old man who entered the intensive care section of the Broussais hospital three weeks ago with pulmonary edema, an accumulation of fluid in the lungs. He failed to respond to treatment and died there last night.

He consistently backed leftist causes, denouncing "U.S. imperialism" in the Korean and Vietnam wars, virulently opposing France's action in Algeria, and speaking out repeatedly against Gaullist foreign policy.

Mr. Sartre's name became synonymous with existentialism, a philosophy that made him one of the most influential thinkers of post-World War Two France.

In plays, novels and essays, he preached that no matter what circumstances a man found himself in, he was free to give his existence importance. "Man... exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself, he is thus nothing other than the whole of his acts, nothing other than his life," he wrote.

This philosophy offered hope to an emerging generation of students and intellectuals in France after the despair and humiliation of the war.

'UAE won't join Europe oil embargo'

BONN, April 16 (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will not join an oil embargo against Europe, UAE Oil Minister Mana Said Al Oteiba said yesterday.

Dr. Oteiba was speaking in a television interview after talks with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Economics Minister Otto Lambsdorff on the first day of a visit to West Germany.

thanked the UAE for its moderate stand within the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"The Federal Republic has always followed your country's petroleum policy with close attention and keen appreciation, based as it is on a responsible attitude towards the overall economic implications," Count Lambsdorff said.

"I would like to express the hope that this policy with its regard for economic interdependence worldwide will increasingly guide future OPEC decision-making, in the interests

not least of those developing nations not endowed with oil."

Count Lambsdorff said consumer countries were concerned about rising prices of crude oil and ensuring supplies. "We are getting into dangerous waters when erratic price movements and sizeable oil scarcities begin to make the already difficult adjustment process nearly impossible," he said.

Count Lambsdorff said a West German proposal for economic cooperation between the Gulf states and the European Common Market would promote general cooperation between Europe and the Arab world.

Spain, Britain to begin Gibraltar negotiations

MADRID, April 16 (AP) — Spanish Foreign Minister Marcelino Oreja informed the lower house's foreign affairs committee today that for the first time, Spain and Britain have agreed to begin negotiations to solve their long-time dispute over Gibraltar.

"The negotiations are to deal with all aspects of this issue, because both sides have decided to solve all their differences on the Gibraltar problem," Mr. Oreja said. He praised British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington after meeting him in Lisbon last week for having "the political courage to face the Gibraltar issue. He is the first Foreign Office secretary who openly recognises the need for a solution of this issue through negotiation, thus accepting the mandate of the United Nations," Mr. Oreja told the committee.

Spain cut off land and telephone communications with the rock's 25,000 residents in 1969 after Britain ignored a 1968 resolution by the United Nations to "decolonise" Gibraltar.

Mr. Oreja said the two governments had agreed to re-establish direct communications between the British crown colony and Spain.

"This means that we are returning to the situation before 1969,

when Spanish workers contributed to the prosperity of the colony without the least social or labour rights and without being able to reside at Gibraltar. That anachronistic situation of colonial exploitation must be ended forever," he said.

Mr. Oreja said the "Spanish Government reaffirms its position on the need to restore Spain's territorial integrity as last objective of the negotiation."

He said Spain "is ready to recognise Gibraltar's rights and safeguard their legitimate interests, their cultural peculiarity and ways of life at the end of the colonial situation... The only thing we cannot do is to recognise a right for them to dispose of something that does not belong to them and never has: sovereignty over Gibraltar."

Spain has pressed the British Government for the return of Gibraltar to Spain, but Britain has repeatedly said the issue cannot be resolved against the wishes of the people of Gibraltar.

Britain seized the rock in 1704 during the War of the Spanish Succession, and nine years later Spain signed the Treaty of Utrecht under which Spain gave Gibraltar to Britain.

World News Briefs

TEHRAN, April 16 (R) — Iranian armed forces joint chief of staff General Mohammad Hadi Shadmehr today denied that Iranian helicopters had attacked Turkish border villages. He was commenting on Turkish press reports yesterday that last Sunday three Iranian helicopter gunships shelled and strafed the Turkish side of the two countries' common border in an area close to several villages. General Shadmehr told the official Pars News Agency there had been no attack on Turkish border villages. He said Iranian reconnaissance helicopters had been investigating the movements of Kurds from the Turkish border area into Iranian territory. General Shadmehr admitted that an Iranian army cargo plane had crossed into Turkish airspace on Sunday while heading for the west Iranian town of Urmieh, but he said this was due to navigational difficulties and the plane had immediately corrected its course. A Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday that Iranian military aircraft twice violated Turkish airspace on Sunday, but Turkey was satisfied with Iranian assurances that the incidents were unintentional.

NICOSIA, Cyprus, April 16 (AP) — All work stopped for two hours in Cyprus today during a two-hour general strike to protest increases in the cost of living and the imposition of stiff new taxes by the government. The stoppage was called by the island's trade unions and other professional organisations to pressure parliament to reject the tax increases when these are debated tomorrow. The official cost of living index in Cyprus has increased by 35 per cent in less than two years.

ROME, April 16 (R) — Italy's new government intends to pay special attention to a long-standing plan for the neutrality of Malta. Christian Democratic Premier Francesco Cossiga told parliament that "one country in the Mediterranean basin to which the government intends to pay particular attention is Malta." "Since 1976, Italy has declared its readiness to guarantee the neutrality of the island, together with other European and Arab neighbours," he said while announcing the programme of his new three-party coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists and Republicans. Such an agreement would include economic and financial aid for which the government is ready to take appropriate initiatives," Mr. Cossiga added. He did not elaborate. The Maltese Government was expected to ask the Italian embassy in Valletta for further information about Mr. Cossiga's ideas.

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, April 16 (R) — Afghan tribal insurgents crossed the Oxus River frontier into the Soviet Union, killed several soldiers and destroyed a Soviet military checkpoint earlier this month, an insurgent spokesman said yesterday. The raid was the first on Soviet territory since the military intervention in Afghanistan last December. The spokesman said the raiders crossed the Oxus River during the first week of April, killed several frontier guards, set fire to a military checkpoint and blew up a bridge across the river. Refugees from the north-east Afghan frontier region, about 500 kilometres north of Kabul, reported the raid after reaching Peshawar, the spokesman said.

TOKYO, April 16 (R) — Japan's former trade and industry minister, Mr. Masumi Esaki, will visit Mexico next month to seek increased crude oil supplies to help compensate for possible reductions in shipments from Iran, government sources said today. Mr. Esaki, a senior member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and a government envoy, would ask Mexico to increase shipments to Japan next year from 100,000 to 300,000 barrels a day, the sources said. Japan currently buys about ten per cent of its oil from Iran, which has threatened to stop oil shipments to countries joining the United States in economic sanctions against Tehran. So far, Japan has not announced any measures. Mr. Esaki will probably visit Mexico for ten days from May 7, about a week after an official visit to the country by Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira. Mexican Industry Minister Jose Andres de Oteya said in Tokyo this month that increased supplies of Mexican crude depended on Japanese financial cooperation in industrial projects, including a major steel mill expansion, railway modernisation and copper mining developments.

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, April 16 (AP) — Thousands of coloured students protesting "racist education" today continued their three-day boycott of classes. The action stemmed from student resentment of the educational system, which segregates schools on the basis of race in accordance with apartheid policies in this white-ruled nation, officials said. Coloured children, who are of mixed black and white blood, believe their education to be inferior to that provided for whites. Blacks also attend separate schools. The students demanded that all teachers be paid equal salaries, "unsatisfactory" teachers be removed, and the shortage of school books be corrected. They also complained of high school fees. Minister of Coloured Relations Marais Steyn said that "positive attention" was being given to the pupils' grievances.

Iran's one big 'export' to the U.S.

By Paul Taylor

TEHRAN — One lucrative Iranian export to the United States has so far escaped President Carter's economic embargo against Iran — film of the American hostages at the occupied U.S. embassy in Tehran.

vices, adding that one of the American priests who helped conduct the services was also offering photographs for cash.

"It is a transaction which reflects credit on nobody, but American viewers are desperate for news of the hostages and this is the only way to get it," said one Tehran-based correspondent of a U.S. television network.

"Besides, \$12,500 (the price of a 25-minute movie show) is peanuts to the networks," he said. It would cost them more than that

to produce two minutes of a variety show.

But the three major American networks, ABC, NBC and CBS, balked last week when they were asked \$250 a minute for a film of one of the hostages, who identified himself as Joseph Subic Junior, talking about spying activities at the U.S. embassy before the student occupation.

"It wasn't a question of the price, which was cheaper than the Easter film. Nor of the content, though we would have certainly

have had trouble with the American Government over showing it," said another network correspondent.

"It was the conditions the students, through VVIR, wanted to impose on us. They were demanding that we show the whole 30-minute film, and that we had to buy it in order to have access to what they said were other films of 12 hostages confessing to spying," he said.

Another network source said that VVIR first tried to auction the so-called "spy film" among the networks, saying they would only sell it to one television station.

"That got everyone mad and we all told them they could stick the film," he said.

So far the moment, the "spy film" has still not been shown in the United States, although it was fully aired on Prime-time Iranian television — voiced over by one of the students known to Western reporters as "Sister Mary" — last week.

Officials at VVIR decline to talk about the transactions, but one television news official, who asked not to be identified, commented, "We just act on behalf of the students, and anyway, it costs money to make those films and it's right that they should pay a fair price."

U.S. network correspondents said they did not think their purchases would fall foul of the new American sanctions against Iran.

"I think everyone recognises that this is a special case," one said. "Besides, I think the State Department and the White House must be as anxious as everyone else to know what the hostages look like after more than five months' locked away in the place."



Militants with photos of hostages

REUTERS

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "هذه هي الصورة الحقيقية للحسين"